



Division of Public Health Services

*Office of the Medical Director
Public Health Preparedness Services*

150 N. 18th Avenue, Suite 140
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 364-4562
(602) 364-3198 FAX

JANET NAPOLITANO, GOVERNOR
SUSAN GERARD, DIRECTOR

Dear Provider:

Aug 24, 2006

Please help protect newborn infants from hepatitis B infection by making sure they receive their first dose of hepatitis B vaccine **before** discharge from the hospital.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published new recommendations for preventing perinatal hepatitis B. Please see Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), December 23, 2005, www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5416.pdf.

These recommendations state that infants should have hepatitis B **vaccine before** discharge from the hospital in almost all situations. Also, all mothers should have *documentation* of hepatitis B testing on their hospital chart.


Infants whose mother's hepatitis B serology is *unknown* should receive hepatitis B **vaccine within 12 hours of delivery**. Infants whose mothers have active hepatitis B infection (i.e. positive for hepatitis B surface antigen [HBsAg]) should receive both hepatitis B **immunoglobulin (HBIG)** and hepatitis B **vaccine within 12 hours of delivery**.


These new recommendations strongly state, "On a case-by-case basis and only in rare circumstances, the first dose may be delayed until after hospital discharge for an infant who weighs >2,000 g and whose mother is HBsAg negative." However, "when such a decision is made, a physician's order to withhold the birth dose and a copy of the original laboratory report indicating that the mother was HBsAg negative during this pregnancy should be placed in the infant's medical record." (MMWR 2005; 54 (No. RR-16); p 17.)


Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) chart reviews show that Arizona infants continue to be discharged from hospitals without their first hepatitis B shot. In addition, mothers are not always adequately screened for hepatitis B infection, and positive serology is sometimes misinterpreted, miscommunicated, or unavailable.

ADHS supports CDC's recommendation for universal hepatitis B serology documentation on mothers' charts in the hospital, and universal hepatitis B vaccination of infants before discharge. The simplest way to insure compliance with the recommendation for universal hepatitis B immunization of all newborns is to adopt standing orders that make this the routine practice for all newborns weighing at least 2000 grams (4 lbs. 6 oz.). Please read these new CDC recommendations and implement them with your patients.

Sincerely,


Karen Lewis, MD, FAAP
BEDCS Medical Director


Michael Clement, MD, FAAP
ADHS Consultant


Keith Dveirin, MD, FAAP
President, Arizona Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics